

SIDE A: CY, ROSE

[Cy and Rose are friends. Rose loves Cy as a friend and admires her. Cy is secretly, desperately in love with Rose but afraid to let her know.]

CY: Something on your mind, Rose?

ROSE: You know when you've got a secret so tender and precious, you just want to hold it close? Because once you let it out, it gets colored over by all the messy imperfection of the outer world?

CY: Um....

ROSE: On the other hand...just come the hell out with it, Rose. Right?

CY: Absolutely. Just...come out.

ROSE: Right. So. Cy. You of the wondrous words. What advice would you give me...to court a soldier?

CY: ...A soldier?

ROSE: One I was deeply, deeply smitten with.

CY: I'm...I...

ROSE: The mountain air got to my brain, right? Oh, god, I'm out of my depth for sure.

CY: Not possible. You're the top...you're peerless.

ROSE: Seriously. I need help.

CY: Rose.... You come over the hills like the sunshine—how can anyone not know it's daytime? You're the light. You're radiance itself. It's done. You've won.

ROSE: Wow. Thanks, Cy. I got shivers. But no. Not done. The honest truth? I've barely talked to him. We've met just a handful of times, and—

CY: Why are you telling me?

ROSE: Like I said, I could use your advice.

CY: Those ladies in your artist collective. You don't talk about men?

ROSE: Yes, but they're...I don't know. I just thought of you first. Aren't you flattered?

CY: Flabbergasted.

ROSE: Should I drop it?

CY: Of course not. Tell me all about this paragon of warrior manhood.

ROSE

He's new on the base. Just transferred in from somewhere...Virginia, maybe. And before that, Iraq—

CY: Just tell me one thing—

ROSE: Corporal.

CY: Go on.

ROSE: Thank God. If he were brass, you'd disown us both.

CY: I didn't say I'd own the grunt. Corporal? How old is he?

ROSE: Maybe twenty-five?

CY: Twenty-five.

ROSE: Stop giving me that look! I've dated enough guys to know that age means nothing.

CY: And I've known enough twenty-five-year-olds corporals to give you that look.

SIDE B: CY, COLE

[Cole is in love with Rose but panics whenever he tries to talk to her. Knowing Cy is Rose's friend, Cole has asked her for advice on how to court Rose. Cy is desperately in love with Rose herself, but knows that Rose is in love with Cole. Cy is unimpressed with Cole, but feels sympathy despite herself.]

CY: Just make up your mind and ask her.

COLE: Ask her to what?

CY: Ask her to go on a walk. You can walk, right? There's a hike through the canyon she's never taken. I'll show you where.

CY: You're getting that deer in the headlights look.

COLE: We go on a walk, and....

CY: Talk about the trees. The squirrels, the sky—tell her your best Army stories. She eats it up.

COLE: Okay ...

CY: She's a painter. Ask her about art.

COLE: Don't know nothing about art.

CY: That's why you ask her. You like sci-fi.

COLE: Yeah.

CY: What's the attraction?

COLE: In this book I'm reading. This kid joins up with this intergalactic force to fight this race of alien bugs. Everyone thinks he sucks and puts him down, but he has this secret...he's got a little bit of bug inside him. So he knows how to kill them, and starts leading all the missions and blowing bug cities apart...he saves the world. Makes me want to be part of something.

CY: May not be Rose's thing. But tell her what it means to you.

COLE: Okay . But....

CY: What?

COLE: How do I—what if she wants to hear stuff like you were saying before? Like, about how great she is, and what I—

CY: Feel about her?

COLE: Yeah. Light and flowers and all that. She'd love it, right?

CY: She would.

COLE: So...can I use it?

CY: Go ahead. Just say it in your own words.

COLE: Fuck!

CY Look, just tell me. How do you feel about her?

COLE: Crazy. Freaked out.

CY: Why do you like her so much?

COLE: Because she's beautiful, and...all that stuff you said.

CY: That's right, / said it.

COLE: So tell *me* how to say it.

CY: What do you want me to do? Feed you lines from behind a bush?

COLE: Every time I come into town...walk into that diner, my heart going a hundred an hour...she looks at me, and...it burns me up. There's this wall. I can't get over it, First Sergeant.

CY: No one's called me that in a really long time. Damn you, Noyes. All right.

SIDE C: ROSE, COLE

[Cole has been courting Rose using email etc. written for him by Cy. Cole and Rose have just had a disastrous first attempt at sex in which Cole panicked, accidentally hit Rose in the eye with his elbow, and fled. Now, they are trying to make up.]

ROSE: So tell me.

COLE: Tell you...

ROSE: What's going on. In your own words.

COLE: What the fuck's that mean?

ROSE: Whoa—

COLE: Who else's?

ROSE No one else's—just say something, damnit!

COLE: Say what?

ROSE Say how you fucking feel—how do I know? For example. Do you like me?

COLE: Yes.

ROSE: Do you like me...a lot?

COLE: Yes.

ROSE: Do you think about me when we're not together?

COLE: Yes. ...A lot.

ROSE When we are together...are you happy?

COLE: Yes.

ROSE Do you want to sleep with me, Cole?

COLE: Yes.

ROSE: Good.

COLE: It wasn't—I should've—

ROSE: Next time, I'd rather you freak out and stay than freak out and leave. Okay?

COLE: I have trouble. Talking.

ROSE: You don't always. You have this passionate, fierce soul inside you. I know. I've heard it. So just let go. Say something. Say whatever pops into your head, right now.

COLE: Um....

ROSE: I know you can do it.

COLE: You're beautiful.

ROSE: Thank you. Say something else.

COLE (struggling to recall text Cy gave him earlier): You're...like...a wild flower. Passing...something on.

ROSE: Beauty. If I remember correctly.

COLE: Yeah.

Pause.

ROSE: Okay, don't hurt yourself—

COLE: There's this space traveler who can't get home. He's been fighting alien bugs all over the universe, then he gets separated from his ship and just floats around in his fighter craft, and inside the ship it's like, bare, only stuff he needs, and he keeps going and going, never seeing another life form and finally lands on this green world that looks okay and he opens the hatch...and sees this alien...beautiful alien...and he looks a long time and then goes back in the ship, seals the hatch and flies off.

ROSE: I see.

SIDE D: CY, DULAC

[Dulac is Cy's former commander, now in command of the military base in the town where Cy lives. Dulac wants to convince or intimidate Cy into giving up her quest to expose sexual harassers in the military. Cy blames Dulac for the suicide of her lover.]

DULAC: Before you left the two sixty-second, you were looking at a clear path to the top. Commendations on the final tour. Distinguished Service bandied around. You had a way about you. I saw it right off the bat. Competent. Fierce. Proud. Not afraid to bite back. Truth is, you were one hell of a soldier.

CY: Don't need you to tell me.

DULAC: The enlisted worshipped you. The brass had their complaints. But I stood by my recommendation. I'd have seen you retire Command Sergeant Major.

CY: Would've served till my last breath. Except according to the Army, I wasn't fit to choke on the same air as everyone else.

DULAC: What you lacked was discretion.

CY: Some things are more important than discretion.

DULAC: Goddamn it, Burns. You had it all beat, and I had your back. Whenever you made a stink about security or convoy support—whenever command started grumbling, I told them you were a good soldier doing your job. Anytime rumors went around that you “threatened morale and discipline”—did I hand them your ass on a platter?

CY You told them to get proof or go to hell.

DULAC: Damn right.

CY: You had *my* back because you *needed* me.

DULAC: You had what it takes. Not everyone did.

CY: Some sick fucker raped her. And you didn't do shit about it.

DULAC: There was nothing I could do—

CY: The hell there wasn't—

DULAC: She didn't give you a name, Burns!

CY: Name or no name, you investigate when some lowlife is preying on the women in your command!

DULAC: You couldn't even hold your shit together when she told you—

CY: I told her to report it.

DULAC: And you know what would have happened if she did. Investigation, probable discharge for both of you—

CY: We would have fought it—

DULAC: —not to mention you said you'd *kill* the man. Shit, Burns. I think it was you she was afraid of. Knew you well enough to know you'd go running through the minefields, blowing yourself up and everyone else with you. If you hadn't made such a stink maybe she would've got over it and kept doing her job. And so would you. Suicide. Can't blame you for feeling bad about it, but hell. It's a coward's way out. And yours wasn't much better. Hiding out in this hole. Lobbing dirty bombs from the safety of your laptop. But maybe it's worth all you gave up. Maybe that's what Specialist—

CY: Don't say her name. Don't you fucking say her name.

DULAC: It's been three years, Burns. Get yourself together, or you'll run yourself through one minefield too many.

SIDE E: CY, SAMMY

[Sammy is Cy's clerk in her store and assistant in exposing incidents of sexual harassment. He looks up to her as a queer role model. They are friends, but Cy is absolutely the boss. Sammy suspects Cy has a crush on their friend, Rose, which is true, but Cy doesn't want to admit it to him.]

SAMMY: You're gonna miss me when I'm gone, you know.

CY: Likewise. When you get to college and have it easy—

SAMMY: You mean when I finally get to exercise my brain?

CY: —you'll appreciate where you came from. Just like I look back on my old days. Reveille at oh six hundred, formation, then hit the paperwork with everything I had. Still have the paper cuts.

SAMMY: Terrifying.

CY: And imagine those city boys swooning over your stories of small-town life. Just like Rose does.

SAMMY: (*remembering*) Ah—Rose— She gave me a ride home last night. Said to tell you she's coming by before she goes to work.

CY: Since when does she need to tell me she's coming by?

SAMMY: I dunno.

CY: Is she all right?

SAMMY: She's great. I mean.... Never mind.

CY: What?

SAMMY: Nothing, nothing.

CY: *What?*

SAMMY: No, really. Nothing.

CY: Sammy. Spill it, or I swear I'll—

SAMMY: You don't think she's been funny lately?

CY Funny? What the hell does that mean?

SAMMY: Spaced out, distracted. Giddy.

CY: Giddy. Rose.

SAMMY: Like she's slightly high all the time. You haven't noticed?

CY: She's does that when she's painting sometimes. It's an artist thing.

SAMMY: She was so moony last night she almost drove us into the canyon. And there was the way she said it.

CY: Which was how?

SAMMY: "Sammy, I've *got* to talk to her." "Why's that, Rose?" "Oh...you'll find out soon enough."

CY: Sounds like she's on the move.

SAMMY: No way. She digs it here.

CY: Waiting tables and painting mountains—that won't hold her forever.

SAMMY: You know what's funny, though? She comes in here, sits in that chair, and listens to you like you're some badass oracle. The other day, when you went downstairs? She said to me, "Three things I love about living here. The sky, the mountains, and Cy. And you, too, Sam." But that was an afterthought. So...does she like girls?

CY: What the hell you asking me for?

SAMMY: It never came up in one of your deep talks?

CY: Plenty of things we haven't talked about.

SCENE F: CY, ROSE

[Rose is grieving for Cole, who is Missing In Action and possibly dead. Rose has just asked Cy to read Cole's last email to Rose aloud. (The email was actually written by Cy, but Rose doesn't know that.) After hearing the letter, Rose went to cry in the bathroom and has just come out.]

ROSE: Did Sammy leave? Is everything okay?

CY: Just talking college. The adjustment's been rough on him, but....

CY: Rose....

ROSE: What?

CY: You okay?

ROSE: Hell, no.

CY: I'm sorry. About the letter.

ROSE: Why should you be?

CY: It caused you pain.

ROSE: Are you kidding me? It's so unbelievably beautiful. There's only one thing in the world I would trade it for.

CY: Right.

ROSE: And I was even a little...almost afraid of his coming home, you know? Because then he wouldn't write those letters. The most human, moving connection I've ever had with anyone. When he disappeared and they stopped, I went numb. And now I feel like I've been ripped open.

CY: Sounds excruciating.

ROSE: But wonderful, too. Writing transformed him, right? He became someone else.

CY: What do you mean?

ROSE: Something about the distance of a keyboard or a pen and paper let him put it all into words. Because saying it in the moment with me was...I don't know. Just too much?

CY: Maybe.

ROSE: Just like I can't read it myself. I bring it here and have you read it, because otherwise—

CY: I'm glad I was here...for the pain and the beauty both.

ROSE: Thank you. (*Wipes her eyes*) That was a wasted trip to the bathroom.

CY: Take your time.

ROSE: Fuck it. I'm going into work like this...red-faced and all. Why shouldn't I look like shit if that's the way I feel?

SCENE G: CY, ROSE

[Cy has confessed to Rose that she, not Cole, wrote the love letters Cole sent to Rose. Angry, Rose has not been speaking to Cy, but now she wants to find out the rest of the story.]

ROSE I came to make sure you're all right.

CY: I said I'm fine.

ROSE And because I want to know why.

CY: Why.

ROSE: Why did you do it?

CY: Because I felt like it.

ROSE: Fine. Go to hell. (*She starts to leave, then stops.*) I'm an idiot about plenty of things. I couldn't see Cole for who he really was. I was naive and blind and in way over my head. And I had no idea—NO idea— what a horror show you and all those other women lived through until you put it up on your blog. But you know what? I'm not a baby. I can make a choice. I can choose whom I love, thank you very fucking much!

CY: And you didn't choose me.

ROSE: You didn't *let* me.

CY: What was I supposed to do?

ROSE: You could have told me. Asked me. What's the worst that could have happened?

CY: Rose, don't be stupid.

ROSE Stupid? You made an assumption—

CY: You were drooling all over warrior man—

ROSE: I didn't have the whole picture!

CY: You painted a landscape and I was nowhere in it.

ROSE: How do you know?

CY: You're not gay, Rose!

ROSE: What are you, the dyke police?

CY: No, I just know the difference between someone who loves women and someone looking for a warm body while lover boy is MIA.

ROSE goes at CY as if to slap her. But doesn't.

ROSE: I kissed you because I meant it.

CY: Go ahead and slap me then. Because you mean that, too.